



**UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA**

**THE EFFECT OF SENSITIVITY TRAINING ON THE SELF-CONCEPT  
OF VOCATIONAL STUDENTS OF DONMUANG TECHNICAL  
COLLEGE, BANGKOK, THAILAND**

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THE EFFECT OF SENSITIVITY TRAINING ON THE SELF-CONCEPT  
OF VOCATIONAL STUDENTS OF DONMUANG TECHNICAL COLLEGE,  
BANGKOK, THAILAND

By

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## ABSTRACT

The study investigates the influence of "Sensitivity" training on the self concept of Donmuang Technical College's students in Bangkok, Thailand.

One hundred and sixty third-year students of certificate level were divided at random into two groups: experimental group and the control group. The research design was pretest-post test control group design. Each group comprised 80 students. An instrument developed by Luxpetch's self concept Rating Scale (1984) was administered to both groups at the beginning and again at the end of the sensitivity training. Analyses were made by frequencies, T-test and Chi-square test carried out on the experimental group and control group.

The major findings were:

1. The students who had undergone sensitivity training had higher self-concept in terms of perceive self, ideal self and emotional adjustment than those who had not.
2. There was no significant relationship between self-concept and gender as well as parents' occupation on the control group. Whereas a significant difference was found between gender and perceived self on the experimental group.





## ABSTRAK

Kajian ini menyelidiki pengaruh "Latihan Sensitivity" (Sensitivity Training) ke atas konsep sendiri (self concept) para-para pelajar Kolej Vokasional Donmuang di Bangkok, Thailand.

Seramai 160 orang pelajar tahun ketiga dari kursus sijil (certificate course) telah dibahagikan secara rawak kepada dua kumpulan iaitu kumpulan eksperimen dan kumpulan kawalan Kajian ini berbentuk "pre test-post test control group design." Tiap-tiap kumpulan mengandungi 80 pelajar. Satu alat kajian yang telah dihasilkan oleh Skala Penilaian (Rating Scale) konsep sendiri Luxpetch (1984) telah diberikan kepada kedua-dua kumpulan sebelum dan selepas latihan "Sensitivity" itu. Analisa telah dibuat dengan frekuensi, ujian Chi-square dan ujian-T yang telah dibuat ke atas kumpulan eksperimen serta kumpulan kawalan.

Penemuan-penemuan yang utama adalah:

1. Pelajar-pelajar yang telah mengikuti latihan "sensitivity" mempunyai konsep sendiri yang lebih tinggi dalam hal penilaian sendiri, "ideal self", dan penyesuaian emosi daripada mereka yang belum mengikuti latihan.

2. Tidak terdapat perkaitan yang signifikan antara konsep sendiri dan jantina juga pekerjaan orang tua pada kumpulan kawalan. Manakala perkaitan yang signifikan didapati antara jantina dan konsep sendiri pada kumpulan eksperimen.

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Thailand, a developing country, is experiencing rapid changes not only in terms of social, economic, political and cultural aspects but also in science and technology. Such rapid changes and developments have created the problem of balancing the physical growth and the mental growth of its people. Poverty in the rural areas leads to mass migration into urban areas and this has resulted in many slum areas in a number of cities including Bangkok. Apart from this, there are also problems of underemployment as well as unemployment among graduates both from universities and colleges (Department of Vocational Education, 1990).

One important point concerning the problem of unemployment of graduate students, especially those from vocational colleges in this era, is that they lack aptitude in their careers and also the ability of performance evaluation such as is required by the task at hand. This shortcoming can be traced back to their schooling years when they blindly followed their course syllabus with the single aim of completing their credit hours without a definite plan as to what they would do or what they would be after their graduation. Some had learned for certain reasons such as to satisfy their parents, to accompany their

close friends, to pursue a particular field of study which has gained popularity in their hometown or in some cases, the college is within the vicinity of their hometown. From a psychological point of view, one of the causes of these problems is that these students do not possess an understanding of their own selves or have a low self-concept as well as low self-control (Mischel, 1974). This is a case mainly because as McDonald (1975) put it ..... one's self-concept is formed on the basis of his/her experiences with himself/herself in a variety of situations over a long period of time. One's self-concept might have started at the early childhood from socialization processes at home, in school, and in other social gatherings. A person shapes a self-concept out of his experiences, where he puts together his knowledge of what he is and how he compares himself to others. His attitudes developed through his school days, from friends and the environment around also help form an ideal of what he should be.

Moreover, Aaree Thamthum (1992) pointed out that a low self-concept among children is due to limited experience provided for them by their parents. A number of these children stay at home most of the time without a chance of venturing out of their premises and eventually they become shy and dependent on someone especially their parents or their siblings. As for their experience in school, bookish learning or teacher-centred methods of instruction do not encourage the development of

self-concept among the children. Furthermore a number of them do not, upon completion of their primary education (6th grade), continue with their secondary education especially those who come from poor families. They then do not know what to do at home except when their parents ask them to do some household chores. As for those who continue their studies in the secondary school, Thamthum (1992) and Suksan (1992) stated that the same pattern is repeated. They do so mainly to please their parents whose high hope for their children being government officials. In school these children still concentrate on bookish learning in order to be able to pass entrance examinations to universities. They seem to have low self-concept in the sense of what they themselves are and what they ought to be. Guidance systems in school become ineffective due to the lack of scholastic testing programmes as well as guidance and counselling activities. Vocational guidance is completely ignored by school teachers in most schools. Suksan (1992) also pointed out that due to the emphasis on bookish learning, students are not prepared for the working world. Even though the Ministry of Education (Department of Vocational Education, 1990) has implemented the work-oriented general education into the school syllabus, teachers are still resorted to traditional teaching methods without creating proper learning activities for the students. This has resulted in the non-existence of a working habit i.e. work experiences, work

exploration, work efficiency, small-scale management and innovation in work.

One important point to be mentioned is that a number of students aim to study for their degrees in universities in order to be able to obtain a white-collar job, especially to join the government offices even though there are very limited posts. More importantly, the most agreed upon problem of low self-concept in students was expressed by the Student Paprol Division (Pianjaroung, 1992). The report stated that due to low self-concept arising from schools, students' quarrelling between different institutes especially in the vocational schools have been increasing every year. Moreover one interesting point concerning students' quarrelling mentioned by the Student Paprol Division is that it is a result of ineffective guidance and counselling activities in the school system. Another important finding from the Development Students Behaviour at Donmuang Centre (Development Centre, 1992) is that students ranging from 16-18 years old, both male and female, tend to behave in a more maladjusted behaviour and develop ill-mental health like aggression, passiveness, frustration, depression and quarrelling more than other clusters.

As mentioned previously, apart from mental discrepancies, another big problem facing the vocational students in this era is unemployment among graduates. Hence the vocational



education system still needs to be improved. Most vocational schools seem to put an emphasis on the sake of obtaining paper qualification which is a stepping stone to higher education rather than equipping students with adequate skills, aptitude and attitude towards self.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Schooling system has emphasized much on knowledge in terms of rote learning of facts. Effective entry behaviour of students seem to be ignored by most teachers (Tipanyo, 1984).

In human resource development, it is necessary that teachers consider the influence of a student's self-concept. In the vocational school, one of the teachers' problems is to determine factors likely to influence the student's poor performance. The student may have an inadequate knowledge on a particular subject either because he is not interested in that subject or he performs the task poorly because he sees himself as a poor student in that subject (Srithong, 1990).

A teacher may be an inspiring factor for the student's information about himself, about his ability to learn. Through guidance programmes, designed to help students clarify their self-concepts by providing them with reliable information about themselves, and in less formalized ways, the teacher may be able to help the students develop self-understanding. This

concept is considered very important also for students in the higher levels of learning especially students in vocational schools. Sensitivity training, according to Bennis (1967), has now grown into a powerful educational force affecting almost all of the social institutions in society. The aims of laboratory training are to develop self-insight, self understanding and developing skill for diagnosing individual group and organisational problems.

Hence, in line with the problems of low self-concept in the vocational student, this study emphasises the influence of sensitivity training at selected vocational institutes. The study attempts to explain the following research questions:

1. Are there any differences in the self-concept of the students who have undergone sensitivity training and those who have not?
2. Is there any relationship between self-concept and some selected variables, namely gender and the parents' occupation?

#### **Objective of the Study**

1. To determine the effect of sensitivity training on self-concept in terms of perceived self, ideal self, and emotional adjustment.
2. To compare the self-concept between the experiment group and the control group in terms of perceived self, ideal self and emotional adjustment.



3. To investigate the relationship between student Self-concept and some related variables, namely gender and the parents' occupation.

### Significance of the Study

Since this study focuses on the enhancement of self-concept (Perceived self and Ideal self) among vocational students, it is expected that the findings will help a vocational student form a better understanding of himself/herself.

Guidance counsellors may use the results of this study to restructure group activities for the development of self-concept among the vocational students. Furthermore, the administrators of institutions may realign policies that would contribute to the development of Self-concept among students.

As for the parents, they will have a better understanding of the personality of their children with regard to their self-concept capabilities and their ability to learn. Therefore guidance for further study should be made more valid.

The results of this study can provide the counsellor with enriching and worthwhile counselling activities that could be used in helping students understand themselves better.

### **Limitations of the Study**

The subjects of this study were 160 third-year 1991-1992 vocational students, who were enrolled in the Certificate Level programme at the Donmaung Technical College, Bangkok, Thailand. They were selected from those in Electronic field of study. The live-in group discussions method was used in this study. The experimental period was limited to two months for each group for each week. Instruments used were the Self-concept Rating Scale.

### **Definition of Terms**

The following definition of terms are given for clarification on how these terms will be used in this study.

Sensitivity Training refers to the training in group dynamics aimed to help an individual understand his behaviour in a group (Bernard, 1977). In this study, it was focused on the self-concept (Perceived Self and Ideal Self) of an individual.

Self-concept refers to the individual's perception of himself, his feelings, of what and who he is, his attitudes, capabilities and worth (Rogers, 1986). In this study, self-concept (Perceived Self and Ideal Self) of the students was measured by Lukpetch's Self-Concept Rating Scale (Lukpetch, 1984).

Self-concept is the image or concept that a person feels about Perceived Self and Ideal Self.

- (1) Perceived Self: a person's view of the feeling and attitude towards himself about what he thinks he is. In this study, Perceived Self would be measured by the Self-Concept Inventory.
- (2) Ideal Self: a person's view of the feeling and attitude towards himself about what he aspires to be or believes he ought to be. Similarly, Ideal Self could be measured by the Self-Concept Inventory.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

The purpose of this study is to investigate the influence of sensitivity training of selected vocational students. The following areas of literature relevant to this study were presented: (1) historical background and development of sensitivity training, (2) self-concept and (3) outcome of studies on sensitivity training.

#### **Historical Background and Development of Group Sensitivity Training**

##### **The Connecticut Experiment**

In the United States of America, during the summer of 1946, Kurt Lewin (cited in Lippitt, 1949) and others from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology were asked by the Connecticut State Inter-Racial Commission to help in training leaders and conducting research on the most effective means for combating racial and religious prejudice in communities. As reported by Lippitt (1949), the Commission's Executive Director explained to Lewin about his staff's inability to translate latent forces of good will in communities into overt endeavours to overcome various forms of bias. Efforts to implement the programme had created serious doubts about its effectiveness.



Lippitt (1949) further noted that Lewin and his associates already had general ideas about group behaviour from leadership studies with Boy Scouts and industrial personnel. Lewin (cited in Lippitt, 1949) believed that he was ready to test his ideas through experiments on community action. His proposed training programme was pre-designed as a workshop in which a "change" experiment could be conducted. The workshop was also intended to train the participants, assemble observations on the ways and where forces of the changes that developed in the participants, measure their extent, and analyze the outcome. Thus, Lewin and the others would simultaneously train the participants and provide research data on what produced the changes.

The programme consisted of two weeks of training for 35 participants, of whom most were professional educators or social agency workers. A few were labour leaders and business people. Almost half of the participants were either Blacks or Jews. These participants were interviewed to determine what they wanted from the workshop. Their expectations varied, but in general they hoped to develop better skill in dealing with other people, more reliable methods of changing people's attitudes, insight into reasons for resisting change, more scientific understanding of the causes of prejudice, and more reliable insight into attitudes and values.

The workshop started with the encouragement of discussion and making decisions by the entire group. The staff treated the participants as equal peers. Early in the session the trainers briefly explained the recording equipment and the other data-collecting devices and how to use them. The meeting evolved into a discussion workshop-type session consisting of three subgroups.

Following the session, most of the participants returned home for an evening with their family. Those who remained, with nothing to do, asked if they might sit in on the feedback meetings in which the research staff reported on the data they had collected in observing the three groups of participants. Most of the staff feared that it would be harmful to have the participants sit in while their behaviour was discussed. But Lewin did not see any reason why the staff should keep data for themselves, or why feedback to the participants should not be helpful. The result was effective as participants reacted to data about their own behaviour. Thus, the important role of feedback in a group sensitivity training was discovered. As Lippitt (1949) described it,

evening evaluation sessions were also frequently held for everyone who wanted to get together to look back analytically on the workshop day. In the beginning this started out to be a research function. The plan was for the members of the staff, the state team, and the research observers to get together to pool their observations systematically on a number of questions which had been worked out

as a check list for analyzing and evaluating each day. This discussion was to be recorded for later analysis by the research team. On the second evening of the workshop, four delegates suddenly appeared at the door and sat in on this rather intimate reporting and diagnosis session. At the end of the meeting, they reported that this had been the most important meeting of the workshop for them and they felt that all the delegates should have an opportunity to come and share in the experience of self-evaluation being demonstrated by the staff. (pp. 113-114)

Lewin (cited in Lippitt, 1949), feeling that it had been a valuable contribution rather than an intrusion, enthusiastically agreed to their return. The next night at least half of the 35 participants were there, seemingly as the result of the "grapevine" reporting of the previous nights' feedback activity. The evening sessions from then on became the significant learning experience of the day, with the focus on actual behavioral events and with active dialogue about differences of interpretation and observations of the events by those who had participated in them.

The staff were equally enthusiastic, for they found the process a unique way of securing data and interpreting behaviour. In addition, the staff discovered that feedback had the effect of making participants more sensitive to their own conduct and brought criticism into the open in a healthy and constructive way.

In this new approach --individual feedback sessions-- the participants spent more of their time appraising their own behaviour. They generally held these sessions in the evening for an hour and a half.

At the end of the workshop, both staff and participants were satisfied that it had been a success. But the major goal of the training's effectiveness was how well the participants applied their new knowledge and skills back home. Six months later, they and their co-workers were interviewed. Their responses indicated that they were using the new methods and that they were now more skillful in improving relationships with others. They also reported an increase in their own sensitivity to the feelings of others and greater optimism about making progress. All reported changed performance in working with people, in planning action, and in bridging the gaps between good intentions and actual behaviour.

### **Theoretical Goals and Process of Group Sensitivity Training**

Although the natural flow of human interaction is encouraged in group training for sensitivity, certain critical objectives and procedures are identified in the literature. This section will review major theoretical goals and specific components of the training process.





## Theoretical Goals

The goals of laboratory training may vary somewhat from group to group, but they generally encompass the following dimensions: (1) the development of self-insight, such as reducing defensiveness and dishonesty at the personal level; (2) understanding conditions that inhibit or facilitate group functioning, such as group size or membership; (3) understanding interpersonal operations in groups, as in improving communication skills and working more effectively with others; and (4) developing skills for diagnosing individual, group, and organisational problems for the purpose of resolving group stumbling blocks or building group cohesiveness (Schein & Bennis, 1965).

Schein and Bennis (1965) state that the learning goals of T-groups (T-group representing Sensitivity Training Group) are moderated by the group's focus and largely determined by the members themselves. Levels of group concern can include individual participants, relationships between and among group members, the organizational role of the individual, the group as a whole, relationships between groups, or issues within the organization the members represent. When the group focuses on the individual member, relevant goals might include increased awareness, attitude change, or behavioural competence. When focusing on role functions, the group might explore attitude toward various group roles and skills in relating to superiors,